

## Before Asking “What Happens Next?”: The Compatibility Between the Olympic Education Principles and The Objectives of Sport for Development and Peace\*

Yeliz OTAY<sup>1†</sup>, Semih YILMAZ<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Marmara University, İstanbul, Türkiye

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### Abstract

The United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace has been closed in 2017 and its mission has been conveyed to the International Olympic Committee. The aim of this article is therefore to explore whether the principles of Olympic Education, based on Olympism and the Olympic Movement, are compatible with the objectives of Sport for Development and Peace. Qualitative research method was used in this research. And phenomenological research design was adapted as an instructive method for collecting and analyzing data. In-depth, semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were conducted with 6 participants whom were selected through purposive sampling based on their expertise on the topics of the research question. The resulting data was compiled using descriptive analysis and classified using content analysis. According to 11 main themes and 2 sub-themes that have been deducted, it has been revealed that Olympic Education principles and Sport for Development and Peace objectives complement each other in terms of conceptual basis and practice. On the basis of the research findings, the following conclusions were drawn: The participants of the Sport for Development and Peace programmes need to take active roles in the process; the policy resolutions upon the research subjects need to be implemented fully and effectively; the stakeholders in the Olympic Education and Sport for Development and Peace processes need to be all in cooperation and coordination; the sustainability of the process needs to be maintained; the strategic partnership between the United Nations and the International Olympic Committee needs to be maintained on an equal footing.

**Keywords:** Sport, Olympic education, Sport for development and peace

\* This study is derived from Yeliz Otay's Master's thesis.

† **Corresponding Author:** Semih Yılmaz **E-posta:** [semihyilmaz@marmara.edu.tr](mailto:semihyilmaz@marmara.edu.tr)

## INTRODUCTION

Olympism has been described as a philosophy based on peace and fairness through which violence and rivalry are mitigated for the purpose of a more peaceful world (International Olympic Committee [IOC], 2021). It is not only the physical strength that is used in a sporting activity but all the values that go along with it (Malter, 1996).

Pierre de Coubertin (1908, p.108), the founder of the modern Olympic Games, has defined Olympism as a state of mind that supports a comprehensive sports education that could include all of humanity, with a spirit of courage and chivalry, a revelation of aesthetic and literary values. This would also nourish national life with a focus on civic life (Loland, 1995). Thus, Olympic Education unfolds as a concept of knowledge and activities that elevate Olympism and the Olympic Movement through wisdom and values (IOC, 2016).

Coubertin’s experiences and ideas about educational system have shaped his perception of the need for educational reform and, accordingly, finding solutions to societal problems through education (De Coubertin, 2000). Olympism is therefore based on the idea of developing the mind, spirit and body through education by means of sport (Loland, 1995). Although Coubertin did not directly mention the term “Olympic Education”, he characterized Olympic pedagogy as the cohesion of human endurance together with the harmony of mind and body (Naul, 2010).

In the 1990s, the number of political authorities and institutions, that have embraced the idea of using sport programs to support social development has accelerated. The use of education through sport on a social, individual and health basis has been the focus of these sport programs (Spaij & Jeanes, 2013).

In 2003, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly Resolution 58/5 endorsed sport as a means to promoting education, health, development and peace (Beutler, 2008; UN, 2003). Thus, the concept of Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) was officially mentioned in the UN General Assembly Resolution (Beutler, 2008; UN, 2003). And the United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace (UNOSDP) was established and has been operational since the early 2000s, but was closed in 2017 (Lindsey & Chapman, 2017). The UNOSDP’s mandate on SDP has been transferred to the IOC. Accordingly, the ongoing collaboration between the two organizations has become a direct partnership (Barclay, 2019; IOC, 2019a).

The aim of this study is to reveal the context and scope of Olympic Education and SDP, while briefly highlighting the stages of development and implementation of both concepts and exploring in depth the opinions and criticisms of stakeholders related to these concepts. This study aims to determine the compatibility of the principles of Olympic Education, based on the values and ideals of Olympism, with the objectives of SDP, while taking into account the UN decision to transfer the SDP mission to the IOC. The aim is to illustrate the phases and reasons of this action on the international level.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Gessman (1991) defines Olympism as a philosophy that can be conceived by understanding the educational mission of the phenomenon. Already in 1908, Coubertin’s concern for education is expressed in the principles of the Olympic Charter as sustaining activities which support physical and moral development that constitute the basis of sport and educating young individuals through sport. In this way, sport combined with the spirit of understanding and friendship promotes a better and a more peaceful world (Binder, 2012; Comité International Olympique, 1908). Coubertin expressed the need for permanent arrangements to support Olympic Education alongside the Olympic Games. This expression is accepted as his first reference to Olympic Education. The transmission of moral values through education with various practices and rules and their subsequent adaptation to the way of life were the first ideas of Olympic Education. Coubertin’s reference to sports education in his book “Pedagogie Sportive” in 1922 has revealed his emphasis on the need to include modern sports understanding in the school curriculum to support the youth through harmony of mind and body. As a consequence, an integrated and universal education system through sport would lead to creation of virtuous individuals who would in turn adopt these characteristics throughout their lives (De Coubertin, 1992; Müller, 2010).

The IOC’s Olympic Values Education Program (OVEP) was born as a youth education program. Education through sport, a guide for the youth, a tool to teach values and an inspiration to get youth involved in physical activity were the themes of OVEP. It’s part of the Olympic Movement with the aim of attracting the attention of young people to the Olympic Games and supporting the mission of creating a better society (IOC, 2008).

Coubertin, while reviving the Olympic Games with the idea of starting an international movement, also believed that social reform could be achieved through education and sport. And sport can build a platform within society without any discrimination of social status and class, thus fostering respect for each other (Loland, 1995). It is recognized that sport alone cannot provide solutions to all the complex social and economic issues, but it is believed that it has the potential to provide an educational platform to motivate and mobilize society and be a source of well-being, inspiration and hope (Right to Play and Sport for Development & Peace International Working Group, 2008).

SDP, on the other hand, has been seen as a new social movement in the early of 1990s or a way of redefining the 19th century “Sport for Good” action, which places sport at a point where it has the potential to transform the society (Kidd, 2011). However, Kidd (2011) distinguishes SDP from “Sport for Good” action when considering SDP’s focus on international development, the leading role of youth, individual improvement for social transformation and non-governmental organizations. The perception of using sport as a strategic tool to support social, health and economic issues has accelerated in the 21st century. The aim was to enable positive improvements in disadvantaged regions with the support of political authorities. This acceleration has been facilitated by the consolidation of sport, aid and development organizations, sponsors and non-governmental organizations (Schulenkorf & Adair, 2013).

The first step for the UN for SDP was taken in 2002, when former Secretary-General Kofi Annan announced a decision to create an Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace to report and evaluate all UN activities related to sport (UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace, 2003). Prior to Annan’s aforementioned decision, the UN initiated the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000, that UN member states are committed to achieving by 2015. This set of goals illustrated the goals of global cooperation for developmental aspirations (UNDP, 2016). Later, in 2015, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were established following the path of the MDGs, which are to be achieved by 2030. The goals were set to be inclusive of all countries, to improve the well-being of individuals and to eradicate poverty through economic improvement, and it was made clear that education, health, social security and employment goals should be monitored alongside economic aspirations (UN, 2019).

The UN definition of development illustrates a broader scope in terms of expanding people’s choices, being inclusive, achieving equity and sustainability, living long, healthy and fulfilling lives and having access to resources for today and the future. And sport is defined as having the potential to be a facilitator in achieving these goals, and its role in sustaining peace is also emphasized (UN Inter Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace, 2003).

The first international conference on sport and development was held in Magglingen, Switzerland, in 2003 and resulted in the Magglingen Declaration and Recommendations, with high-level participation from UN agencies, governments, sport federations, the media, athletes, the business community and non-governmental organizations. In 2005, a “Call to Action” decision was issued on the basis of the Magglingen Declaration. This recognized sport as a crucial component of long-term planning for international efforts to achieve the MDGs (The International Platform on Sport and Development, 2019).

There have been criticisms of both Olympic Education and SDP. The increased ability to access information, escalating injustice, inequality, consumerism and social problems in the era of globalization have created the need to question the effectiveness of the current education system. Therefore, in order to be effective, an education system based on Olympism needs to be built on a structure that has the ability to act freely and has a transformative configuration (Culpan & Wigmore, 2010).

On the SDP side, Kidd (2011) mentions the lack of a development model that is based on verifiable data or results and adequate social support to ensure social integration. The mentors of the program are criticized for not being familiar with the local structure and culture (Spaaij & Jeanes, 2013). SDP is defined as a still developing sector as it has not been part of a systematic planning and coordination and it has been isolated from the other development program with inadequate funding, although it has been supported by many international conferences and political authorities (Kidd, 2008).

The MDGs highlight the term “Global Partnership” in their provisions (MDG Monitor, 2019). In 2010, the first UN-IOC Forum on “The Importance of Partnership” took place in Lausanne. It was declared by the IOC as a companion to the UN’s mission to achieve peace around the world. The IOC has been granted observer status at the UN in recognition of its role in using sport as a vehicle to address issues such as gender equality, communicable diseases, humanitarian aid, thus contributing to the achievement of the MDGs. This status demonstrates the strong bond between two organizations that share the same philosophy and values (IOC, 2019c). In 2014, the IOC and the UN signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), underlining the high-level cooperation between the two organizations. And within the UN resolution, sport has been recognized as a means to improve education, health, development and peace (IOC, 2019b).

In 2017, the UN closed the UNOSDP due to cost-cutting measures (Carew, n.d.) and transferred its mandate on SDP to the IOC (Lindsey & Chapman, 2017). Thus, a new era has begun for the IOC, the UN and the SDP.

## **MATERIAL AND METHOD**

### **Research Model**

The purpose of exploring the phenomenon by clarifying and categorizing the answers given to the research question through flexible means and semi-structured methods, such as interviews, focus group interviews and observation, is presented as the basis of the qualitative research method. As this method is used to describe the variable, to define and explain the relationships between the variables and to illustrate personal experiences along with group norms, it was considered to be in line with the focus of this study (Mack et al., 2005), which is to conceive the compatibility of Olympic Education and SDP through the foundations, objectives and the procedures of these concepts.

Phenomenology has been used as a guide in this study, exploring the harmony of the above concepts through the experience and knowledge of the participants. Accordingly, purposive sampling method was used to obtain data. It aims to collect substantive views of the participants on the research topics while sharing their experiences (Gill, 2020). The participants were selected based on their experience and knowledge in Olympic Education and SDP at national and international arena.

The interview method has been used to collect data through the opinions of interviewees by using their personal perspective and expression, which is recognized as an advantage of this method (Koca, 2017). It was a convenient option for the study to include interviewees with different qualifications, and in this way, it was facilitated to obtain a variety of perceptions that pave the way for multiple realities (Yıldırım & Şimsek, 2006).

## **Participants**

Six interviewees (participants/P1...-P6) were selected by criterion sampling as a purposive sampling strategy. The criteria has been determined as the expertise (in theory and/or practice at national and international level) of the participants on the topics of the research question (Olympic Education and SDP). This strategy is adopted to attain the participants’ knowledge and to have them share their views and experiences. Two participants from the Turkish Olympic Committee (TOC), one current and one former participant from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Turkish National Commission, Physical Education and Sport Monitoring Group, and two academics from the fields of Olympic Education and SDP, who have been active in these fields for many years in theory and/or practice at national and international level, were included in the study. The interviewees were called directly. The date and time of the interview was arranged according to their availability.

## **Ethical Approval**

The study was ethically approved by Marmara University, Faculty of Health Sciences, Ethics Committee (Document date & no.: 27.06.2019/ 76).

## **Data Collection and Analysis**

An interview form with open-ended questions was prepared in order to cover the research topic in detail. The aim was to get the interviewees to share their knowledge and thoughts that they had in mind about the research focus and topics (Foddy, 1993).

The focus of the qualitative research method is on the individual experiences, conditions and interpretations of the participants in relation to the research question. In this sense, the main purpose of this method was to derive from the data, as it is inferred from the words and statements of the interviewees, thus arriving at information (Koca, 2017). Within the conceptual framework of the research focus and on the research topics, 12 questions were initially prepared for data collection. Four academics with expertise and studies in research-related fields and in qualitative research method were consulted on the relevance of the questions to the research fields, comprehensibility and clarity to obtain accurate answers. It is aimed to ensure validity and reliability by this way.

The question evaluation group was formed by considering an academic profile related to the fields of Olympic Education, TOC procedures within 20 years, education through sport and development through sport and/or qualitative research methods. Subsequently, 3 questions were eliminated and the questions with integral details were merged based on the evaluation group’s assessment. Finally, 5 questions corresponding to the main pillars of the conceptual framework were brought forward for the interview (Main pillars of the conceptual framework are illustrated in Table 1). Some of the questions were as follows: “What are your thoughts on the concepts of Olympic Education and SDP; what are your thoughts on the universality of the values based on education through sport (Olympic Education - SDP program); could you interpret the closure of the UNOSDP and the transfer of its mission from the UN to the IOC in 2017, in terms of its advantages and disadvantages?”



The interviews were conducted face-to-face at the interviewees’ locations in Ankara and İstanbul, after the interviewees gave their written consent to be interviewed and recorded. Six interviews were conducted. The interviews lasted between 30 minutes and 90 minutes. The researcher has interviewed the participants in person. Descriptive analysis and content analysis have been used together as data analysis methods. The interviews were recorded with a tape recorder. The recordings were transcribed into prose by computer by the researcher. The researcher’s notes were compared with the prose to ensure that all details were included. The prose of each interview was examined in detail and codes were identified that related to the interview segments and were consistent with the conceptual framework. As a result, categories were established to simplify the codes to be used to identify themes.

### **Validity and Reliability**

Since the flexibility of the researcher is a crucial principle for the validity of the research, subsidiary questions were asked along the interview to enable the clarity and expand the scope of the interview questions. In order to maintain reliability, the questions were supported with clarifications by the researcher when necessary. In this way, the boundaries of the research subject were maintained.

As it is believed that sound objectivity is difficult to achieve in qualitative research method (Yıldırım & Şimsek, 2006), a “critical friend” who monitors the progress of the study from the beginning was used for data analysis instead of inter-rater reliability where the same data is coded by different researchers. The advantage of the critical friend technique is that it supports the objectivity, transparency and integrity of the study (Appleton, 2011) to maintain the reliability of the study. Cowan and Taylor (2016) define the critical friend as an individual who listens to the researcher and provides critical feedback as the research is being developed. The critical friend questions the inferences in the data analysis process and maintains reflexivity with a diversity of ideas as the research progresses.

In this study, five people, with different backgrounds were identified as critical friends. Sport management, Olympic Education, qualitative research and political science were their main fields of activity. The progress of the research was maintained through communication of the researcher with the critical friends. The stages and progress of the study were kept up to date by the researcher for the critical friends and their assessment was taken into account to maintain the integrity and progress of the study. Together with the monitoring of critical friends, the data derived from the interview questions were analyzed in detail, developed through codes, categories and finally themes by the researcher and presented as findings to conclude the research question (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Exemplification of coding process

| <b>Pillars of conceptual framework</b>  | <b>Themes</b>  | <b>Coding samples of raw data</b>   |
|---|--|---|
| Olympic Education and SDP as Conception | 1. Sport as an enabler   | Sport is multifaceted<br>A tool for education                                       |
|   | 2.The relation between Olympic education and SDP                         | Values education at schools<br>Olympic values education via practice at life cycle  |
| Universality                            | 3. Universality of sport   | Different perspectives of East & West<br>Universal norms & local standards          |
|   | 4. Sport as a human right  | Human right to attend physical activity<br>International organizations’ attitude    |
| Efficiency                              | 5. Intangibility of concepts   | SDP and its philosophy<br>Inefficiency in adapting intangible concepts to sport     |
|   | 6.Sustainability and Communication                                       | Stakeholders and network for communication<br>Difficulties in evaluating programmes |
| Stakeholders                            | 7. International and national stakeholders                               | Importance of international organizations as stakeholders                           |
|   | 8. Cooperation with non-governmental organizations                       | Government & NGOs<br>NGOs and communication via sport                               |
|   | 9. Sport policy and sport culture in Türkiye                             | Inefficiency of sport policy<br>Focus on performance at sport                       |
| UN and IOC Partnership                  | 10. Advantages of transferring the SDP mission from the UN to the IOC    | IOC’s sanction power<br>Raise at IOC’s potential for comprehensiveness              |
|   | 11. Disadvantages of transferring the SDP mission from the UN to the IOC | UN & IOC’s insufficiency at universality<br>Narrowing sphere of influence           |

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the aim of this study, categories and themes were derived during data analysis. Eleven themes (numbered in accordance with the five pillars of the conceptual framework in Table 1) and two subthemes were as follows:

### ***Sport as an enabler (1) and education through sport, development and peace through sport (subthemes)***

Kofi Annan, the former Secretary-General of the UN, has mentioned the supporting role of sport for peace and the MDGs in the report published on the occasion of the UN’s declaration of 2005 as the International Year of Sport and Physical Education. It is based on the fact that when young people participate in sport, they build their own health and self-esteem, they develop skills, they experience teamwork and tolerance, they abstain from illegal drugs and violence (UN, 2005).



When the participants (P1...-P6) were asked about their perception of the main subjects of this study (Olympic education and SDP), P6 defined the role of sport as follows:

*“It is in a position where everyone can experience it and be aware of it, it’s used to make any issue you want to promote visible”.*

The general consensus of the participants on the supportive role of sport resulted in two sub-themes as education through sport and development and peace through sport. P1, P3, P5 and P6 express the importance of including sport in one’s life during childhood and they describe Olympic Education and Olympism as a perspective that nurtures the education program:

*“Sport is an educational tool that can be used to reveal values, to educate virtuous individuals and thus to create healthy communities”.*

UNESCO, a specialized agency of the UN and a pioneer in physical education and sport, also emphasizes values education through sport as a theme of its Physical Education and Sport Programme (UNESCO, 2019). As highlighted in the Olympic Charter, Olympic Movement promotes Olympic Education and cultural programs as an integral part of the Olympic Movement with its role as a partner in using sport as an enabler. And it guides National Olympic Committees (NOCs) to take an active role in initiating Olympic principles and values through sport and education in their countries (IOC, 2015). The International Inspiration Programme at 2012 London Olympic Games was an example of this initiative, involving 12 million children and young people in 20 countries. The aim of this program was to enrich the lives of young people through physical education, activity and play, thus promoting the link between education, community and sport (Kay, 2012; T.C. Gençlik ve Spor Bakanlığı, n.d.).

P2 has revealed that: *“TOC has started to deal with the social issues such as refugees, gender equality and human rights which are related to each other, besides sport, which is our field of activity”*, adding that: *“In direct partnership with the UN, cooperation has been established on maintaining peace in the world through sport”*. The UN report on the proclamation of 2005 as the International Year of Sport and Physical Education noted that there has been a steady increase in the activities of international sports organizations and federations (Olympic Solidarity, FIFA, etc.) focusing on international cooperation and development (UN, 2005). The idea of using sport for development and peace has become relatively more widespread since the publication of the aforementioned UN report. There are many reasons for this, one of which is the situation of refugees. The IOC, through the NOCs, has approved an “Emergency Fund” to help alleviate the negative effects of the refugee problem on the ground. The IOC’s initiative in this social area was based on the aim of improving the living conditions of the refugees through funded sport centered programs for children and youth (Türkiye Milli Olimpiyat Komitesi, n.d.).

P6 states that: *“The UN Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 can provide some solutions to the adversities in different parts of the world”*. Kay (2009) points out that sports-based program and physical education have a significant impact on the lives of young people in disadvantaged countries. Research in Tanzania shows that the children who have participated

in sports-based peer education about HIV/AIDS have gained more information and self-esteem than those who have participated in education through the national school system. It also shows that in communities where young girls and women are socially, economically and physically segregated, empowerment through sport can strengthen their position against patriarchal mentality (Kay, 2009). Despite this viewpoint, Darnell (2015) illustrates two limitations, one of which is that the youth who are interested in recreational and cultural activities other than sport may not be able to be reached through sport. The other limitation is the methodological difficulty in assessing the level of impact of programs that are intended to be used to strengthen personal attributes such as self-sufficiency, self-esteem, resilience, and individual empowerment. The peer leaders’ diverse peculiarities and the programme participants’ diverse backgrounds as their education, place of residence, cultural traits have been revealed as the reason of this limitation.

### ***The relation between Olympic Education and SDP (2)***

In exploring the compatibility of Olympic Education and SDP, P5 states that “*The programs based on Olympic Education will naturally strengthen the SDP programs*” and P6 points out that: “*There is a strong link between Olympic Education and SDP. SDP programs enable everyone to participate in sport and, as in the Olympic ideals, SDP helps to remove the barriers to achieving this goal*”.

This strong link between the two concepts is explicitly emphasized in the program of the Blue Dragon Children’s Foundation. A non-governmental organization based in Vietnam states that education and poverty alleviation are related concepts (Blue Dragon Children Foundation, 2023). The foundation’s football project focuses on instilling positive behavior, fair play and teamwork. The female and male participants are rewarded for their behavior on the football field in terms of fair play and adherence to the rules (Hoekman et al., 2019). This reveals the harmony between the subjects of this study. Right to Play and Sport for Development & Peace International Working Group (2008) also reveal that the role of sport in SDP has been embraced by the Olympic Movement. The scope of Olympic and Paralympic values have been broadened to include the development of life skills, the strengthening of the social development of countries and the building of a sustainable future.

### ***Universality of sport (3) and sport as a human right (4)***

All the participants have compromised on the universality of the values and ideas about Olympism and Olympic Values, codes of conduct and human dignity. According to Abreu (2002), the adaptability of Coubertin’s doctrine to different ethnic groups and cultures is the basis of universality. Although it is also argued that sporting activities can take different forms in different cultures when local and cultural interpretations are taken into account, Coubertin’s understanding of the togetherness of different cultures prioritizes universality, as revealed at the IOC session in Stockholm in 1908: “All games, all nations, all men...” (Abreu, 2002; Bonini & Verratti, 2011). Kadoodooba (1997) also points out that despite different approaches to sport in African communities, certain universal values sustain their existence. In addition, Hwang and Henry (2023) mention about the adaptation of realist evaluation of Olympic Education

interventions in different contexts to conceive what works for whom and to explore the integration of Olympic ideals within Olympic Education in different settings.

Most of the participants in this study also argue that sport is a human right. Donnelly (2008), however, points out that several international working groups have been established on several subjects as women’s rights, people with disabilities and SDP but there is a lack of work on child and sport and children’s rights at international and national sport organizations.

### ***Intangibility of concepts (5) and sustainability and communication (6)***

P1 defines the concept of SDP as a “cloud”, implying that the ambiguity of the concept that prevents programs from being as effective as it is intended to be. Atalay (2004) explains the vagueness of the definition of Olympism as a result of describing the concept in different forms as a transmitter of values that construct international harmony or a philosophy that prioritizes amateurism. As SDP and Olympism are based on some values, the definition of “value” can enable the understanding of the concepts, but Topçuoğlu (1999) shows that value as a concept is two-sided. It is the value inherent in the concept itself and the value that is transferred to the concept by people and society. Thus, it is said that this two-sided definition of value obscures the understanding.

In addition to the intangibility of the concepts, sustainability was identified as an issue within the efficiency pillar. Inefficiency or the lack of enforcement mechanisms was defined as a barrier to the sustainability of the program of the subjects of this study. Weaver and Jordan (2008) exemplify the process of evaluating the efficiency of European Union policies at the time of their research that predominant policies do not or hardly focus on sustainable development in their evaluation process. Thus, this gap in the evaluation process creates an obstacle for policymakers to monitor sustainability. And the 2015 report of Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) shows that sustainability is not considered as an integral concept in the UN’s MDG monitoring and evaluation process. The monitoring and evaluation of the MDG program has been carried out by various sectoral segmentations and different disciplines, which has affected the level of efficiency of the program (Woodbridge, 2015). Cohen et al. (2020) also illustrate the barriers to effective evaluation, as the bias towards the expectation that SDP program are inherently linked to positive outcomes and the short-term assessment of the impact of program.

P6 defines the way to maintain sustainability in terms of program success as “*Maintaining the active role of the local*”. Thus, it has been emphasized that the involvement of the local and regional actors in the process of the program enables the sustainability of program. In the Development Policy Document of Türkiye it has been mentioned that a sustainable, balanced, human-oriented, flexible, competitive and participatory approach has been adopted to support regional development and planning (T.C. Sanayi ve Teknoloji Bakanlığı, 2018). This approach has been established on the basis of efforts and potential of local actors and dynamics with a strategy and learning process (T.C. Sanayi ve Teknoloji Bakanlığı, 2018).

Ensuring adequate resources has been identified by P2 as one of the elements of program sustainability. Right to Play and Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group (2008) express the importance of cooperation between stakeholders within or outside governments, at local or national level, to increase the efficiency of program in terms of information, human resources, financial and logistical support.

Communication and coordination were highlighted by P1 and P2 in relation to the efficiency of the program of the subjects of this study. According to Schulenkorf (2012), effective communication between stakeholders with the same objective is important for the efficiency of the process to achieve that objective.

#### ***International and national stakeholders (7)***

All the participants in this study agree that “*All stakeholders related to education through sport or development and peace through sport should be involved in projects or program based on these themes*”.

The report of the Right to Play and Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group (2008) emphasizes that development agencies should be aware of the potential role of sport in development and that sport should be a part of development policies and program. Sport organizations also play an important role in development and peace because of their knowledge and experience of sport and the extent of their network. They sometimes take a leadership role with government. Sport organizations work with other organizations involved in education, health, youth, people with disabilities, women, economic development and employment to organize sport-related program. Local governments, non-governmental organizations and sports federations have been identified in this report as stakeholders involved in sport-related projects and program (Right to Play & Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group, 2008). Özbey and Güzel (2009) illustrate that in order to maintain a long-term, influential and efficient Olympic Education program, the TOC should take a leading role with the support of the IOC and all stakeholders working in coordination.

Participants in this study mention the importance of the agencies’ expertise in their main subject when participating in a program. Darnell (2007) points out that the specialists who come to Africa from North America are well equipped in terms of sport. However, the lack of their knowledge about the cultural aspects of the region to which they come with the aim of supporting program using SDP is criticized. This is seen as an obstacle to achieving a realistic and equitable result. Giulianotti et al. (2019) also mention the need for SDP to establish a broader interaction with other development and welfare sectors through the exchange of knowledge and expertise in terms of professionalization.

#### ***Cooperation with non-governmental organisations (8)***

Participants in this study confirm the benefits of cooperation with non-governmental organizations. Cooperation with different types of organizations that operate in different sectors enables program to connect with different social segmentations and sources of power, as well

as multifaceted communication. This communication facilitates the relationship building between the target community groups and the program implementers (Covey, 1995).

### ***Sport policy and sport culture in Türkiye (9)***

The participants of this study mention the lack of an effective sport policy in Türkiye and define the sport culture in Türkiye as developing. P3 expresses that sport in Türkiye is based on performance expectations.

The governmental bodies related to education, sport and development have issued policy documents on physical education and sport in Türkiye. The objectives and the expression of the expected achievements imply that they are consistent with each other. The National Youth Sport Policy Document of the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Türkiye (T.C. Gençlik ve Spor Bakanlığı, 2013), the Development Plans of the Ministry of Development of the Republic of Türkiye related to education (T.C. Kalkınma Bakanlığı, 2013), the program of the Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Türkiye on physical education and sport in primary schools (T.C. Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2018) all emphasize physically active youth, individuals and society with the aim of developing skills and sustaining economic, social and cultural development. However, as the subject of this study, the status of Olympic Education as value education through sport and physical activity and its feasibility have not been clearly defined in government policies. Thus, the participants of this study mention the disharmony between the provisions of government policies and their adequate implementation.

The study by Açıkgöz et al. (2021) also concludes that the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Türkiye and its local institutions should re-evaluate the implementation of sport-based projects in order to be more effective in the long term. Organizational capacity building by improving the skills of local staff and introducing innovative methods are considered to be the basis for an effective program and the realization of the expected impacts (Açıkgöz et al., 2021).

### ***Advantages of transferring the SDP mission from the UN to the IOC (10)***

When exploring participants’ opinions on the transfer of the SDP mission from the UN to the IOC, P2 reveals that “*IOC has been active in sport for development and peace before the transfer of the mission*”, P3 states that: “*IOC’s sphere of influence on sport is wider than the UN*”, and P4 expresses that: “*This transfer enables the IOC to meet the needs of the community for recreational sport and physical activity*”.

In The International Platform on Sport and Development (2017), the transfer of the mission is presented as representing a new era and initiating a new path of development. Darnell et al. (2019) show that the “Sport for Good” perspective is adopted by the influence of international and intergovernmental organizations such as the UN, the Commonwealth and the IOC. While some of these organizations focus on the development side of SDP, others focus on the sport side of the concept, but it is suggested that the aspect of coordination of these organizations within the SDP framework outweighs this differentiation of focus (Darnell et al., 2019).



### ***Disadvantages of transferring the SDP mission from the UN to the IOC (11)***

When the participants’ point of view on the transfer of the SDP mission from the UN to the IOC is elaborated, P1 and P5 state that “*The IOC’s sanction mechanism is less effective and its scope of influence is narrower than that of the UN*” and “*The IOC’s approach to the sports and related activities that are outside the IOC’s competence is not clear*” and P6 expresses that: “*It’s difficult to foresee the IOC’s ability to have an impact in the SDP arena, since it’s a structure that is deeply involved in the Olympic Games. Therefore, the active presence of the UN on this platform should continue*”.

Although it is assumed that it is positive for the IOC to be in a more central place in the SDP, the omission of the step of consultation with the stakeholders of the SDP or the disregard of the information flow phase on the transfer of the SDP mission have been presented as an inappropriate step in an assessment in the International Platform on Sport and Development (Sanders, 2017). Another point that has been highlighted is the status of the IOC, which is seen as an organization that stands for an elite, organized, competitive and commercial side of sport. It is also mentioned that mega-events have more potential to exacerbate inequalities in the world when compared to supporting development. Furthermore, it is shown that the IOC has authority over sports federations, but the UN has more influence over governments and the UN has more connections with different sectors besides sport (Sanders, 2017).

Darnell (2018) also questions whether there is a change in the direction of SDP and its focus, and a return to “sport plus” programming where sport is the main focus. However, looking at the evolution of SDP since the 2000s, the concept seems to be accepted as a valuable aspect by both the international development sector and the world of sport (Darnell, 2018). Bardocz-Bencsik and Doczi (2019) illustrate the ambiguity of the UN’s leadership role in SDP issues with a question about the UN’s effectiveness in the decision-making process, which ultimately refers to the closure of the UNOSDP. Giulianotti et al., (2019) also mention the need for a transnational leader to fulfil the mission of UNOSDP and comment on the position of IOC as a leading sports organization, which has to express a comprehensive transnational SDP strategy. IOC’s main focus on Olympic sports and the Olympic Movement compared to the global sport sector is revealed as a reservation when it comes to SDP leadership (Giulianotti et al., 2019).

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is concluded that the aims and practices of Olympic Education and SDP are intertwined and complementary. The values on which Olympic Education and SDP are based are recognized as universal. Although there are different cultural aspects in the world, the rights and values of human existence (human dignity, right to life, right to education, gender equality, children’s rights) have common universal characteristics. On the other hand, the effectiveness of international and national policy documents is questioned by the stakeholders, who point out that theory and the practice do not always go hand in hand. Sustainability is presented as a crucial element of the themes of this study. Cooperation, communication and coordination of



all stakeholders are key to achieving effective results and long-term impact. And the closure of UNOSDP and the transfer of the SDP mission to the IOC is the beginning of a new timeline and a scope for further research.

Thus, the recommendations are as follows:

- National, regional and local actors need to be able to manage the program and assume responsibilities in accordance with their cultural characteristics in order to ensure the sustainability of the Olympic Education and SDP program.
- The policy documents that contain and illustrate the objectives and aims of the program do not guarantee the fulfilment of the tasks. Therefore, effective sanctioning mechanisms need to be established.
- Cooperation, communication and coordination between all the stakeholders need to be fully maintained, taking into account local needs, interests and inclinations. The people in the target region need to be equipped and actively be involved in the organization of the program. Sustainability needs to be ensured through effective planning, organization, monitoring and evaluation phases.
- Direct partnership and cooperation between the UN and the IOC need to be maintained on a balanced basis, as both organizations have unique characteristics to contribute to education through sport/ Olympic Education and SDP. Effective, balanced and coordinated action by two organizations shall pave the way for efficiency and sustainability.

## LIMITATIONS

The date of the closure of UNOSDP in 2017 has been considered as a turning point for the IOC and the UN, and for the mission of integrating sport into educational and social goals. Therefore, as a limitation, this study has been kept within the timeframe prior to the closure of UNOSDP in order to reveal the path that led to the UN’s decision to transfer the SDP mission to the IOC. This timeframe provides a potential opportunity for future research into the subsequent process regarding the roles of the IOC and the UN after 2017.

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## Ethical Approval

**Ethics Committee:** Marmara University Faculty of Health Sciences Non-Interventional Clinical Research Ethics Committee

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